Housing for Refugee Inclusion
Notes from training in Vienna 6 – 8 March

Communalities in terms of lessons learned and challenges as well as recommendations

Access to Social housing: IO, Social Organizations and cities

Austrian context
- Every municipality has different eligibility requirements
- Municipalities demand a minimum length of residence (Austria 2 or 4 to 10)
- Basic knowledge of German
- Every municipality has a quote and Asylum camp
- Upper Austria: 5 years stay + language certificate
- Deposit paid by DIAKONIE Caritas & Red cross

Caritas Austria
- Rent temporary apartments, Final accommodations are rented by users
- **Salzburg** has 55 apartments (24 in their office building) for asylum seekers or resident permit
- **Vorarlberg 12% social rental housing (municipal or cooperative)**

Madrid city council: Madrid human right plan
- Goal 8 protect migrants right and xenophobia. Review city policies that fight hate crimes.

France DIHAL DÉLÉGATION INTERMINISTÉRIELLE À L'HÉBERGEMENT ET À L'ACCÈS AU LOGEMENT
- Housing for refugees mainly within the social sector: 19 000 refugees rehoused in 2018
- Paris waiting list from 6 to 9 years

HORTON Housing
- Provides temporary accommodations for resettled Syrians people
- Housing + basic furniture (500 units)
- Connect people to private and social housing
- Poor quality housing
- No waiting time, houses available but low quality

Fedasil
- Deals with resettlement programs

UNHCR Austria

- Less funding in Europe for humanitarian organizations

ARGE
- Provides intermediary accommodation

Importance of successful projects

Successful projects from across Europe we've hearted hear about in this 3 days) show that equally **important is to build a sense of community and to put in place support, in cooperation with a range of stakeholders**: local authorities, employment and training services, care and healthcare providers, associations **and inhabitants both of migrant and non-migrant background**.

Positive communication

Good communication creates understanding; it's important to raise awareness and encourage exchange, to build trust and mutual understanding between newcomers and the existing local community, break down the barrier of fear, choosing "to talk to each other not about each other.

- Share positive narratives trough good practices
- Tackle negative perception of migrants and refugees
- Integration is a two ways process not assimilation
- Volunteers is dealing with the emergency situation
- Cost of "helping them today" is way more manageable

Impact of positive examples

Let's not forget that **examples of successful integration can have a strong positive impact on public opinion and counteract the populist drift, which is putting the European integration project at risk.**

- **Build on good practices and lessons learned**
- **Create a database for best practices**: Create or improve an (existing) EU database that allows the sharing of best practices on different issues, including reception, housing and integration.
- Migration is and has been a norm, and if we look towards the future, we see that Europe in fact needs migrants, and that successful inclusion and integration is impossible without decent and affordable housing to start with.

Main challenges for cities and social organizations

Cities and social organizations lack funding to tackle the changing needs.
As the latest EUROCITIES report highlights, **cities do not have enough budget capacity** to house and assist no/low income groups due to budgetary cuts and recruitment freezes. As has been said here *for many reasons, cities are the main destination of this inflow.* Furthermore, cities get very little financial support from national or regional governments compared to the given responsibilities. Like that, the cities lack upfront funding to local service providers which can hamper both reception and integration services for refugees.

More than a shelter

- We need to offer more than a shelter
- There is gap in transition from Temporary to final accommodation
- problem of housing quality (Amsterdam and Bradford)
- integration linked to projects
- The Problem is not housing but how to afford it" Ramon Palomino.
- Accommodating 6-10 peoples in a hostel room should not be an option even for a short period.

Rural VS urban area

- Big cities are for lonely people but many difficulties to access housing and job opportunities.
- Rural realities are Cosy and manageable, suitable for families and better support and housing. Limit for the rural area is that language courses are in cities
- "Small places have big hearts"

There is a Housing shortage and mismatch between rural and urban area: different approaches and strategies

- Examples: Amsterdam city have all powers for integration, in Spain the ministry has power
- Difficulty to maintain and improve building standards in many countries
- Poor or inadequate housing implies a risk associated to health and safety.
- Long waiting time to access to housing & language courses

Acceptance of the new comers

In some cases, the acceptance of newcomers, refugees and displaced persons by the neighbourhood is not easy. Due to the negative representations of migrants and refugees the local community is reluctant and suspicious about new migrants. This can get many forms, such as the denial of accommodation by private property owners; imposing restrictive conditions or criteria limiting access to publicly supported accommodation;

Recommendations to the study visit: Zinnergasse

Creating social mix in the housing estates and local neighbourhood is key to avoiding socio-spatial segregation, and residents including migrants and vulnerable people should be able to shape the kind of community they want to live in by participating in the design and implementation of new initiatives.
Often people living in social housing neighbourhoods are more familiar with and ready to accept differences between people. It's important to work with citizens to build our collective image/story, reflecting on how cities and neighbourhoods were built through immigration.
It is possible to view migrants as an opportunity to make the local area more attractive, in terms of the diversity and skills they bring.